

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 MANAMA 01768 050908Z
ACTION SCS-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 H-02 /019 W
-----112943 060315Z /64
R 060615Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6492
INFO AMEMBASSY DOHA

UNCLAS MANAMA 1768

REF: (A) STATE 186292 (B) MANAMA 1706

FOR H AND SCA

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: CDES (VARJABEDIAN, JOHN ARAM), BA
SUBJECT: DESPOSITION OF REMAINS OF JOHN ARAM
VARJABEDIAN

1. CONGRESSMAN BRODHEAD INTERESTED.
2. WE HAVE RECEIVED FOLLOWING LETTER IN RESPONSE TO OUR EFFORTS TO GET A WAIVER OF 10-YEAR WAITING PERIOD PRIOR TO EXHUMATION. QUOTE - THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER OF JULY 26, 1978, CONCERNING THE POSSIBILITY OF EXHUMING THE REMAINS OF LATE MR JOHN ARAM VARJABEDIAN, WHO WAS BURIED IN BAHRAIN ON JUNE 1, 1978, FOR SHIPMENT TO THE UNITED STATES. ENQUIRIES HAVE BROUGHT OUT THAT THE REMAINS WERE BURIED IN BAHRAIN BECAUSE THE EMBALMED BODY SEALED IN A COFFIN AT DOHA, QATAR, AND SENT FOR CREMATION IN BAHRAIN COULD NOT BE CREMATED AS THE BAPCO CREMATORIUM WAS NOT FUNCTIONING AT THAT TIME AND THE REMAINS IN THE COFFIN, TEMPORARILY ACCOMMODATED AT THE SALMANIYA HOSPITAL MORTUARY, STARTING GIVING OFF OFFENSIVE ODOUR

DUE TO CONTINUING DECOMPOSITION, INSPITE OF EMBALMING.
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AS A SITUATION CONSTITUTING A HEALTH HAZARD WAS CREATED, THE BODY HAD TO BE BURIED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. AS A RULE WE DO NOT PERMIT THE EXHUMATION OF BODY FOR SHIPMENT OF THE REMAINS UNTIL 10 YEARS HAVE ELAPSED AFTER BURIAL SO AS TO ALLOW ENOUGH TIME FOR DISINTEGRATION OF THE SOFT PARTS INOFFENSIVELY. A WAIVER OF THIS RULE IS NOT POSSIBLE AT PRESENT, TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION NOT ONLY

THE HEALTH HAZARD INVOLVED IN EXHUMING THE REMAINS SO
SOON AFTER BURIAL BUT ALSO THE STRICT CRITERIA APPLICABLE
IN THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT OF HUMAN REMAINS BY AIR.
ASSURING YOU OF OUR COOPERATION AT ALL TIMES. YOURS
SINCERELY, SIGNED DR. P.P. MATHEW, ACTING DIRECTOR,
PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTORATE. END QUOTE.

3. THIS DECISION IS NOT UNEXPECTED AS CONSOFF HAS
TALKED WITH PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITIES ON SEVERAL
OCCASIONS IN THIS CASE AND THEY HAVE NEVER MOVED FROM
THEIR POSITION. IT IS CONSOFF'S OPINION THAT THE
ASSESSMENT OF HEALTH HAZARDS BOTH WITHIN BAHRAIN AND
DURING SHIPMENT IS REALISTIC.

4. UNFORTUNATELY THERE IS NOTHING FURTHER THAT CAN BE
DONE AT THIS TIME TO CARRY OUT THE WISHES OF THE DECEASED'S
WIDOW TO HAVE HER HUSBAND'S BODY EXHUMED AND TRANSPORTED

TO THE U.S. FOR REBURIAL. AT EVERY PHASE OF THIS UNHAPPY
EPISODE BOTH THIS EMBASSY AND EMBASSY DOHA HAVE MADE
EVERY EFFORT TO CARRY OUT MRS. VARJABEDIAN'S WISHES. PLEASE
CONVEY TO HER AND ALL PARTIES CONCERNED OUR DEEP
REGRET THAT THIS HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE.
POWERS

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NNN

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